

By John Hall

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The **U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom** has named China has a “country of particular concern” each year since 1999, citing the country’s restrictions on religious expression and practice. Religious organizations must be registered by the government before worshippers can practice their faith, leading to conflicts between the government and unregistered faith groups.

Last year, almost 400 unregistered Protestants were detained and “the Chinese government stepped up efforts to destroy churches and close ‘illegal’ meeting points,” according to the commission’s 2010 report. The Chinese government remains particularly concerned about the role outsiders play in religious institutions.